

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7363

UNCLAS BEIRUT 14432

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: SWEL, PINS, LE, US

SUBJECT: AMERICAN MARONITE INTEREST IN PROVIDING HUMANITARIAN
ASSISTANCE TO LEBANON

REF: SECSTATE 273661

1. LEBANON TODAY HAS APPROXIMATELY SIX MONTHS SUPPLY
OF WHEAT IN THE COUNTRY, 12 MONTHS SUPPLY OF RICE,
3 MONTHS SUPPLY OF SUGAR, AND 4 TO 6 MONTHS SUPPLY
OF FEED GRAINS. THERE IS NO REPEAT NO VISIBLE SHORTAGE
OF CANNED FOODSTUFFS AND NONE IS FORESEEN FOR THE TIME
BEING. ALTHOUGH GOVERNMENT SLAUGHTERHOUSE IN BEIRUT
NOT REPEAT NOT WORKING, SUPPLY OF FRESH MEAT NOT
REPEAT NOT PERTURBED. POULTRY AND EGGS ADEQUATE IN
THAT, TRADITIONALLY EXPORT ITEMS, MUCH EXPORTING
HAS CEASED. CLOTHING BEING SOLD AT CUT-RATE PRICES
IN OPEN AIR MARKETS ALONG PRINCIPAL BOULEVARDS. AS
OF THE MOMENT MEDICAL SUPPLIES MORE THAN ADEQUATE.

2. PROBLEM, OF COURSE, IS ENDEAVORING TO ASSESS WHAT
NEXT 30 DAYS WILL BRING, I.E. INCREASED FIGHTING,
CURRENT STATE OF FIGHTING OR CEASEFIRE.

3. PORT STILL HANDLING ONLY TOP REPEAT TOP PRIORITY
ITEMS SUCH AS POL. SEA SHIPMENT OF RELIEF SUPPLIES
MOMENTARILY, THEREFORE, OUT QUESTION. NOTWITHSTANDING
RELATIVELY BASIC SURPLUS OF ESSENTIALS, DESPERATE NEED
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EXISTS FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE LOST EVERYTHING AND WHO

CANNOT PAY FOR FOOD, CLOTHING, ETC. A ARONITE COMMITTEE HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED IN BEIRUT, BOTH LAY AND CLERICAL MEMBERS, UNDER CHAIRMANSHIP BEIRUT BISHOP ZIADE. NO REPEAT NO OTHER COMMITTEES ESTABLISHED, BUT IT IS ANTICIPATED SOME MAY BE SET UP ONCE PATRIARCH RETURNS FROM EUROPE LATE NEXT WEEK. ESSENTIAL PROBLEM HOWEVER, HAS BEEN MET IN THAT MOST OF REAL HARDSHIP IS IN THE BEIRUT AREA AND ZIADE'S COMMITTEE'S JURISDICTION EXTENDS TO BEIRUT SUBIRBIA.

4. LAST EVENING DICUSSSED FOREGOING WITH MICHEL KHOURY WHO IS THOROUGHLY RESPONSIBLE, PRAGMATIC LAWYER WELL AND FAVORABLY KNOWN TO THIS MISSION FOR MANY YEARS AND THAT MOST USEFUL THING AMERICAN GROUP COULD DO WOULD BE TO FURNISH CASH TO BISHOP ZIADE. FOOD AND CLOTHING FOR REASONS INDICATED ABOVE, NOT REPEAT NOT PRACTICAL AND MEDICINES NOT REPEAT NOT REQUIRED, (I INVITED KHOURY'S ATTENTION TO FACT THAT IF COMMITTEE RECEIVED BONA FIDE REQUESTS FOR MEDICINE, THEY CAN PROBABLY BE MET BY AMERICAN UNIVERSITY BEIRUT HOSPITAL.)

5. KHOURY SUGGESTED, AND I SUPPORT IN STROGEST TERMS THAT, TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE, AMERICAN MARONITE ASSISTANCE BE CHANELLED VIA PATRIARCH KHREISHY AND OR BISHOP ZIADE.

6. HEARTILY CONCUR IN DEPARTMENT'S VIEWS RE TRANSPORTATION AND HOPE NAM CAN COME UP WITH CASH.
GODLEY

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